

IN THE CLAIMS

1-18. (Cancelled)

19. (Original) A computer-usable medium having computer-readable program code embodied therein for causing a computer system to perform the steps of:

- a) defining a plurality of business units comprising the supply chain,
- b) providing financing by the clearinghouse for at least one business unit wherein the supply chain is a factor in determining the degree of financing for the business unit, and
- c) coordinating supply chain transactions by the financial clearinghouse between the plurality of the business units.

20. (Original) The computer-usable medium of Claim 19 wherein the supply chain transactions comprises at least one of the following:

payments for value-added services, payments for materials, payments for logistic services, credits for value-added services, credits for materials, credits for logistic services, transfer of raw materials, transfer of parts and components, transfer of finished products, transportation of materials, storage of materials, and the exchange of information.

21. (New) A computer implemented method for providing a financial clearinghouse for a supply chain, said method comprising:

ordering a component, wherein a first node of a supply chain orders a manufacturing component from a second node of said supply chain via a supply chain clearinghouse; generating a bill for said manufacturing component by said second node; and

coordinating a supply chain transaction by said supply chain clearinghouse between said first node and said second node.

22. (New) The computer implemented method as recited in Claim 21 wherein said supply chain clearinghouse coordinates the transfer of financial assets between accounts maintained by said supply chain clearinghouse and wherein said coordinating further comprises:

reconciling respective accounts of said first node and said second node; and
transferring funds between said respective accounts in response to said reconciling.

23. (New) The computer implemented method as recited in Claim 22 further comprising:
reconciling an account of said supply chain clearinghouse; and
transferring funds between said respective accounts and said account of said supply chain clearinghouse in response to said reconciling.

24. (New) The computer implemented method as recited in Claim 21 wherein said manufacturing component is selected from the group consisting essentially of raw materials, parts, components, and finished products.

25. (New) The computer implemented method as recited in Claim 21 wherein said coordinating further comprises:

generating a payment for a transaction selected from the group consisting essentially of payment for a material, payment for a value-added service, and payment for logistic services.

26. (New) The computer implemented method as recited in Claim 21 wherein said coordinating further comprises:

extending credit by said supply chain clearinghouse for a transaction selected from the group consisting essentially of extending credit for a material, extending credit for a value-added service, and extending credit for logistic services.

27. (New) The computer implemented method as recited in Claim 21 wherein said coordinating further comprises:

expediting a commercial transaction selected from the group consisting essentially of a purchase order, an acknowledgement, electronic billing, and proof of delivery.

28. (New) The computer implemented method as recited in Claim 21 further comprising:
conveying ownership of said manufacturing component from said supply chain clearinghouse to said first node.

29. (New) A computer implemented method for providing a financial clearinghouse for a supply chain, said method comprising:

ordering a component, wherein a first node of a supply chain orders a manufacturing component from a second node;

generating a bill for said manufacturing component by said second node to a supply chain clearinghouse; and

coordinating a supply chain transaction by said supply chain clearinghouse between said first node and said second node.

30. (New) The computer implemented method as recited in Claim 29 wherein said supply chain clearinghouse coordinates the transfer of financial assets between accounts maintained by said supply chain clearinghouse and wherein said coordinating further comprises:

reconciling respective accounts of said first node and said second node; and
transferring funds between said respective accounts in response to said reconciling.

31. (New) The computer implemented method as recited in Claim 29 wherein said supply chain clearinghouse coordinates the transfer of financial assets between accounts maintained by said supply chain clearinghouse and wherein said coordinating further comprises:

transferring funds from an account of said supply chain clearinghouse to a respective account of said second node when said manufacturing component is sent to said first node; and

transferring funds from a respective account of said first node to said account of said supply chain clearinghouse when said manufacturing component is received by said first node.

32. (New) The computer implemented method as recited in Claim 31 further comprising:

transferring funds from said account of said supply chain clearinghouse to a restricted account of said second node to pay for materials used by said second node; and

transferring funds from said account of said supply chain clearinghouse to said restricted account of said second node to pay for logistics costs incurred by said second node

33. (New) The computer implemented method as recited in Claim 29 wherein said manufacturing component is selected from the group consisting essentially of raw materials, parts, components, and finished products.

34. (New) The computer implemented method as recited in Claim 29 wherein said coordinating further comprises:

generating a payment for a transaction selected from the group consisting essentially of payment for a material, payment for a value-added service, and payment for logistic services.

35. (New) The computer implemented method as recited in Claim 29 wherein said coordinating further comprises:

expediting a commercial transaction selected from the group consisting essentially of a purchase order, an acknowledgement, electronic billing, and proof of delivery.

36. (New) The computer implemented method as recited in Claim 29 further comprising:
conveying ownership of said manufacturing component from said supply chain clearinghouse to said first node.